DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 331 417 HE 024 479

TITLE	Off-Campus Graduate Education: A Policy Statement.
INSTITUTION	Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S., Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	89
NOTE	19p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S., One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 430, Washington DC 20036-1173 ($10.00).
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Deans; Access to Education; College Administration; College Planning; College Programs; College Role; Definitions; *Extension Education; Financial Support; *Graduate Study; Higher Education; Noncampus Colleges; *Nontraditional Education; *Off Campus Facilities; Universities

ABSTRACT

Graduate courses are increasingly being offered in a wide variety of non-traditional campus settings including industrial plants, military bases, shopping malls, and off-campus centers established by universities mainly for the purpose of providing clasroom instruction. This booklet provides guidelines for institutions considering such programs. The first section reviews the current status of off-campus graduate education, discusses variations of the concept of off-campus graduate education, and defines several related terms. Issues considered in other sections include: the role of the graduate dean; responsibility of colleges/universities to the community in providing off-campus programs; off-campus versus on-campus programs; identification of qualified and motivated faculty resources to teach off campus; and financial issues involved in offering off-campus training. Academic and administrative guidelines for implementing off-campus graduate programs are provided. (LPT)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED331417

A POLICY STATEMENT

OFF-CAMPUS GRADUATE EDUCATION

CGS

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HE 024 479

CGS TASK FORCE ON OFF-CAMPUS GRADUATE EDUCATION

Marlene Springer (Chair)
University of Missouri, Kansas City

Harold R. Crawford
Iowa State University

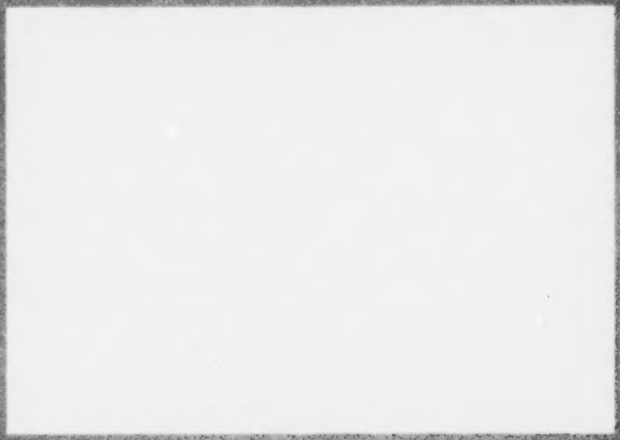
Stanley Gabor
Johns Hopkins University

Paul Jones
University of Louisville

Robert L. Ringel
Purdue University

Marilyn J. Baker
Dean in Residence, 1988-89
Council of Graduate Schools

A POLICY STATEMENT



COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

OFF-CAMPUS GRADUATE EDUCATION

FOREWORD

One of the most striking changes in graduate education during the 1980s has been the increase in off-campus programming. Graduate courses in hundreds of fields are being offered by scores of universities in every imaginable setting, from shopping malls to high school buildings, from industrial plants and military bases to elaborate off-campus centers established by universities expressly for the purpose of providing classroom instruction. In addition, interactive television and computer networks have changed the way we define off campus, since students at remote sites can be participating in courses taking place on campus.

This is not a new development, but there are clear indications that the pace is increasing and that more graduate education is being provided away from traditional campus settings. This change provides an exciting opportunity for universities to explore several intriguing questions, among which are: What is the relationship between a series of graduate courses and a graduate program? Are there essential aspects of graduate level education that must be present regardless of where the course/program is offered? To what extent does the commitment to offer graduate courses off campus imply a commitment to offer complete graduate programs off campus? How well does graduate education travel?

This booklet is intended as a guide for those who are out there and for those considering going.

Jules B. LaPidus
President
Council of Graduate Schools
May, 1989

Off-Campus Graduate Programs

Preface

Since 1861, when the first doctoral degree in the United States was awarded, there has been a tremendous change in the scope, purpose, and structure of graduate programs. Today, at least 450 institutions offer both master's and doctoral degrees, and approximately 700 more provide the master's degree alone in scores of disciplines. Recent years have witnessed rapid growth in the number of students enrolled and degrees conferred, and a dramatic increase in the number of part-time students, who now constitute a majority of the graduate students pursuing degrees.

In response to the needs of this part-time clientele, graduate education is being offered increasingly at locations other than the main campus of the degree-granting institution. In addition, advances in telecommunication technologies have created the potential for innovative delivery systems at these locations. The Council of Graduate Schools issued a policy statement on Non-Residential Graduate Degree Programs in 1977. Developments in the last ten years have created the need for a new document which not only reaffirms but also expands on that policy. This brochure reviews the current status of off-campus graduate degree programs, defines a common language for discussion, articulates major issues of concern, and recommends academic and administrative guidelines for implementing such programs.

Introduction

A complex and changing world requires new knowledge and advanced skills, as well as new methods and places of instruction. A number of social and technological changes in the U.S. are affecting dramatically where and how we conduct graduate education.

University of Miami

First, more employers are requiring post-baccalaureate coursework or degrees for employees to retain jobs, receive salary increases or be promoted, and they are increasingly specific about the kind of knowledge they want their employees to have. Similarly, individuals in growing numbers are pursuing advanced degrees, both to enhance professional opportunities and for intellectual or cultural enrichment. For most adults, change within the workplace,

combined with advances in knowledge and technology, will necessitate lifelong learning in order to advance in or maintain a career.

Second, the age distribution of graduate students is changing dramatically. Adults between the ages of 30 and 45 will comprise 25 percent of the U.S. population in the 1990s. The circumstances of these adult students—i.e. being employed and/or rearing a family—often do not permit them to pursue post-baccalaureate degrees full time or in residence at locations distant from their homes or workplaces.

Third, advances in technology have had a major impact on graduate programs. For many years, the definition of an off-campus location was an off-site classroom with a faculty member present. However, advances in telecommunications now enable students to use computer terminals connected to a university miles away and to take classes broadcast from one site to another by satellite or microwave transmission. Integrated electronic systems which connect students with faculty and with other institutional resources, such as data bases and library services, are also able to provide critical linkages regionally, nationally, and internationally.

In response to these changes, graduate institutions have developed a wide range of off-campus programs in virtually every discipline. These programs offer accessible graduate education, often at locations and times convenient for full-time workers. Although these are predominantly non-thesis master's programs, doctoral degrees are being offered increasingly at off-campus locations as well. All of these changes raise questions about what is really essential to quality education at the graduate level and how far-reaching and innovative institutions can and should be.

Definition of Terms

A recent survey of representative public and private four-year institutions revealed that there is no common denominator determining what constitutes "off-campus graduate instruction." At some institutions the phrase "off-campus degree program" refers to any program in which a student may earn degree credit at a site away from the main campus. Other universities include only those programs in which a student earns *all* of his or her credits at remote sites. Still others consider any course taught by a regular faculty member—whatever the location of the class—to be an "on-campus" course, and many institutions, especially those located in urban areas, consider the entire community to be "on-campus." In order to establish a common language for discussion of graduate education, the Council of Graduate Schools

suggests the following definitions (for purposes of this document, "university" is used to refer to any institution of higher education offering graduate programs):

1. Main campus: The location generally designated as the home base for the university, where the major portion of its instruction is conducted. This may include campuses for the health sciences, agriculture, etc., which are separate from, but within a short drive of, the rest of the campus.
2. Off-Campus Site: A facility used by an institution away from the main campus either to provide instruction (in person or via telecommunications) in a more accessible location for a portion of the student body, or to take advantage of the special educational resources available in that location.

Texas Tech University Division of Continuing Education

3. Off-Campus Center: An off-campus site that is operated by the university which provides ongoing administrative and support services relating to graduate education.
4. Off-Campus Graduate Program: A program leading to a master's, specialist, or doctoral degree which provides the opportunity to complete all or most degree requirements at off-campus sites.
5. Off-Campus course: A course in which the students are at a site other than the offering institution's main campus. This includes classes offered through electronic media, even when such classes originate at the main campus, and classes offered by institution "X" on the campus of institution "Y." These courses may be taught by full-time or part-time university faculty, or by other individuals who have contracted to provide instruction.
6. Degree Candidate: A student who has applied and been admitted to a specific degree-granting program.
7. Credit: Recognition of academic work completed which may be applied toward a university degree. This does not include those continuing education units (CEU) or other non-credit recognition not applicable toward a degree.
8. Non-Degree Candidate: A student (sometimes classified as a "special" student) who may be enrolled in one or more credit-bearing graduate courses but who has not been admit-

ted to a specific degree program. Institutions ordinarily place limits on the number of credit hours for which a non-degree candidate may enroll and/or may limit the earned hours which may later be transferred into a degree program.

9. Non-Traditional Student: A student, usually over the age of 25, whose higher education experience is generally not pursued full time and often not in residence. This person may have enrolled in school intermittently or be returning after a long hiatus, and generally has career and/or family responsibilities in addition to his or her role as a student.
10. Residency: A requirement that students earn a minimum number of credit hours on the main campus of the institution at which they are candidates for graduate degrees.
11. Graduate Faculty: Full-time or part-time faculty members who have been designated by the institution as qualified to teach in graduate programs, through either the traditional faculty appointment process or a special review. Such status should require evidence of a continuing high level of professional activity and it generally includes the right to teach graduate courses and to direct graduate theses and/or dissertations.
12. Educational Technology: Equipment or other resources which provide instruction through interactive or one-way television, videotapes, cassettes, computer links, satellites or microwave transmission.

Role of the Graduate Dean

There is no question that the demand for off-campus programs is growing and that graduate education will need to take more varied forms in order to respond to society's demands. The traditional model of a student and professor in a classroom on a college campus, while still the predominant one, is being augmented by a variety of other models, including changing locations, formats, and delivery systems. In addition, many institutions find themselves under growing pressure from state and local governments or business and industry to develop new programs or expand to new locations to meet specific community or employee educational needs.

Graduate deans must take an active, leadership role in confronting and resolving the issues of off-campus education for two important reasons. First, they play a critical part in assuring that any such programs meet the overall quality standards of the institution. Since they are not tied to any one academic program and can, therefore, be more objective concerning financial con-

siderations, they are uniquely suited to ask the tough academic and administrative questions required to insure a quality program.

Second, graduate deans have a responsibility not just to respond to initiatives from academic departments or external constituencies, but to take an active, constructive role in defining the university's overall policy for graduate education, especially the conditions under which universities should consider developing off-campus programs.

The decision to offer a graduate program off campus must be an institutional one, based on each institution's mission, academic strengths, and financial resources, and the graduate dean should be closely involved in that decision. The most important consideration is whether the program is consistent with accepted standards for graduate level education within the overall purpose of the institution. This determination involves careful thought about the university's responsibility to the community, the activity's comparability to on-campus programs, the allocation of faculty resources, and the program's financial viability.

University Responsibility to the Community

An often cited justification for off-campus programs is the stated (or unstated) responsibility of colleges or universities to serve the needs of the community—either local, state, or national. This may mean providing advanced training close to the main campus for students who, because of family or work commitments, cannot complete traditional degree programs during regular weekday hours. It may also mean serving special populations (e.g., employees in the military or certain industries such as accounting or aerospace) in their own on-site facilities. It also may mean offering a wide range of traditional advanced degrees far from the main campus through telecommunications or satellite transmission, the development of off-campus centers, or faculty travel to off-campus sites.

University of South Carolina

Traditionally, graduate education in the United States has served the needs of society for advanced training and education. However, each institution must decide which needs it is best suited to meet, for whom, and in what locations. In an attempt to meet an ever-growing list of educational demands in the community, many institutions often try to be all things to all people, and thereby jeopardize their ability to provide high-

quality teaching and research in the areas which are most directly a part of their mission. Each institution must question and search continuously to maintain a balance between quality and outreach.

Comparability With On-Campus Programs

The most critical academic issue in establishing off-campus programs is ensuring their comparability with on-campus programs. It is essential that the name of the degree and the institution from which it is earned mean the same thing, regardless of how or where the degree is earned. The traditional way to insure this has been to insist that off-campus programs adhere to the same rigorous standards as on-campus programs. While this principle is important, it is also unrealistic to expect that all aspects of an off-campus program will be *identical* to those of an on-campus program. The location of the program, the student clientele, the unavailability of traditional faculty and library resources, and the different physical setting often mean, in fact, that the educational experience will not be identical.

Given this reality, institutions should focus their attention on the skills and knowledge which they expect students in the program to acquire (whether learned on or off campus), and develop ways to ensure that all graduates have acquired them. There are usually several ways to accomplish the same educational goals, utilizing different faculty members and different settings.

The essential point is to create a program for off-campus students which accomplishes (often in a unique way) the same educational objectives as programs developed for on-campus students, i.e., to make off-campus graduate education truly a *graduate* experience.

Faculty Resources

Identifying well qualified and motivated faculty to teach in off-campus programs and rewarding them for those efforts is one of the most difficult issues facing graduate administrators. To ensure comparability with on-campus programs, it is clearly preferable to engage individuals who have already been appointed as faculty members on the main campus. This could well include a combination of part-time and full-time faculty, or non-tenure track and tenure-track faculty—ideally in the same proportion as exists on campus. This arrangement implies a significant commitment on the part of the regular, on-campus faculty to off-campus programs, including a willingness to accommodate their schedules to these programs. At the very least, faculty need to be supportive of those colleagues who do engage in off-campus instruction.

When it is not possible to get sufficient on-campus faculty to teach in off-campus programs, or at least to have the same mix of part-time and full-time faculty as exists on campus, it may be possible to identify talented local individuals who have qualifications comparable to those of regular faculty members. Such individuals should be approved by the faculty of the home academic department or program, and the graduate school if appropriate, through an established review process, and they should be accountable to the department for their performance. Whether they are regular tenure-track or adjunct faculty, criteria for their appointment and promotion (if applicable) should be made clear. The institution should also provide adequate faculty support by encouraging periodic visits to campus, providing instructional and research services, and conducting regular performance reviews. Not to do so is to undermine seriously the comparability and eventual success of the off-campus venture.

University of New Orleans Downtown Center

Finances

Off-campus programs are often thought to be financially lucrative because they involve large numbers of students, an inexpensive physical plant, and relatively low instructional and administrative costs. They may be less attractive, however, when all hidden expenses are considered: central administrative time, student support systems, salaries (and benefits) to maintain faculty and staff on campus to support these programs, travel expenses, communication costs, etc. In determining the financial viability of an off-campus program, all of these factors need to be added into the final tally. However, the ultimate decision about whether or not to offer or continue an off-campus program should be based primarily on the goals of the institution, the demand for the program, and the academic quality of the offering.

Academic Guidelines

The Council of Graduate Schools recommends the following guidelines for establishing and maintaining effective, high quality off-campus graduate programs:

1. The offering of off-campus programs should be consistent with the dynamic nature of the institution. This may include meeting the educational needs of the surrounding community, serving a specific professional population, or furthering advanced teaching and research in the most effective location.

2. Graduate degrees should be offered only in areas where academic strengths already exist on campus and where the institution can provide adequate support in cognate areas.
3. Proposals for new or revised off-campus programs should be approved through the institution's existing curriculum or program review process, which should include a thorough evaluation by the graduate dean. Standards for off-campus programs should be commensurate with those of on-campus offerings, with an equally stringent, regular evaluation process.
4. Before deciding to offer an off-campus graduate program, the institution should conduct a thorough assessment, including: societal need; relevance to the mission of the institution; academic and administrative impact on the main campus; student demand; fiscal viability; geographical competition; faculty interest and availability; and the availability of adequate facilities and educational resources.
5. Admission criteria should be the same as those used by the institution for its on-campus programs. Degree-seeking students should demonstrate high academic attainment at the undergraduate level, knowledge of subject matter prerequisite to their graduate education, and a potential for the successful pursuit of graduate study.
6. Whenever possible, off-campus programs and courses should be taught by regular, full-time faculty, preferably as part of their assigned teaching load. Adjunct faculty should be used only when regular faculty are not available or when they possess particular knowledge or expertise.
7. While sharing the same academic standards as on-campus programs, off-campus programs should be sensitive to the specific characteristics of the target student population, e.g., the need to schedule classes around work assignments, the usefulness of remote telecommunications, and student interest in specific academic topics or practical applications.
8. Off-campus graduate programs require especially careful academic advisement, delivered at sites and times convenient to students. Academic advisors should be assigned to all students at the time of admission and should meet with students regularly. Students with a particular academic interest should be linked to faculty with similar interests. Advisors should also keep in close contact with on-campus offices for any changes or clarifications in policy or degree requirements.

9. Special efforts should be made to insure that library, computer, and other academic resources are adequate and easily accessible. This may involve: 1) establishing specialized libraries and computer labs at the off-campus site; 2) making formal agreements with nearby public, private, or university libraries or computer facilities for special use by these students; 3) providing students with on-line access to bibliographical search services and inter-library loan programs, as well as electronic links to campus computer facilities. In most cases, a combination of these approaches is necessary to provide the intellectual resources needed for graduate study.

Administration

Off-campus graduate programs deserve and need effective leadership, planning, and management. Moreover, because of the distance from campus, they require special attention to support services, marketing techniques, and personnel matters. Program administrators should address the following:

1. What evidence exists of the need for the program at the proposed location, particularly in terms of potential student interest?

2. What approvals from external organizations (accrediting bodies, state licensing boards, commissions of higher education) are required?

3. Has program planning involved those departments/schools which may necessarily have to participate in the program and/or those agencies or groups who are potential employers of students?

4. What are the sources of budgetary support for the program? How does the program's budget relate to on-campus programs? To what extent is the program enrollment driven? How long will the start-up funding continue?

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

5. For what period of time does the department/school intend to offer the program in the particular geographic location? How firm is this commitment? What is the potential flow of students?

6. How far in advance will courses be planned as to day, hour, and length? Has this schedule been shared with students and other clients?

7. What will be done to ensure that the faculty teaching in the program understand the purpose of the program, the characteristics of the students, and the nature of the off-campus teaching/learning setting?
8. Have clear institutional policies been developed on compensation and workload for those faculty teaching in the program?
9. What communication channels exist between students and faculty or between students and the department/school? What special efforts will be made to ensure that students have significant and regular interaction with faculty and other students?
10. What criteria and plans for evaluation of the program will be used by the department/school and on what timetable?

Answers to these questions will require institutions to develop the following policies, procedures and administrative support systems:

1. Comprehensive, written guidelines for all off-campus programs offered by the institution, including the major issues raised in this brochure.
2. Regulations for all directors/coordinators of off-campus programs to provide uniform academic and administrative direction and facilitate communication.
3. A specialized marketing campaign which includes advertising, publications, and publicity about the off-campus location.
4. A qualified group of faculty who are willing to participate in off-campus, non-traditional education.
5. Institutional guidelines for faculty compensation, workload, tenure, and promotion which recognize the additional demands placed on faculty teaching in off-campus programs.
6. Well-established, functioning student support services, such as advisement, parking privileges, I.D. cards, duplication facilities, etc.
7. A clearly defined source of financial support which includes funds for the special needs of off-campus programs (travel, telecommunications, books, computers, off-campus resident staff, facilities rental, etc.).
8. Careful attention to instructional delivery systems, with a special assessment of the advantages and limitations of educational technology.

New York University
School of Continuing Education

9. An administrative structure which ensures clear lines of responsibility and decision making, and a home for the off-campus program with an existing academic unit.
10. Adequate library and computer facilities as well as other academic resource/support services.

Summary:

This discussion offers institutions a brief glimpse into the rapidly expanding world of off-campus graduate education. The guidelines provided here are not intended to be proscriptive or all-inclusive. However, they should help institutions decide whether or not to offer individual graduate programs off campus, and, if they are offered, to insure that they enjoy the same reputation for excellence as on-campus programs. In a society facing profound and rapid change, universities must work especially diligently to provide quality education to a greater number of students, in a wider variety of formats and settings than ever before.

OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS—1989

Robert T. Holt, *Chair*, University of Minnesota
Vivian A. Vidoli, *Past Chair*, California State University, Fresno
Russell G. Hamilton, Jr., *Chair Elect*, Vanderbilt University
Richard Attiyeh, University of California, San Diego
Hazel J. Garrison, Hampton University
Jeanne E. Gullahorn, State University of New York at Albany
Kenneth L. Hoving, University of Oklahoma
Catherine Lafarge, Bryn Mawr College
Joyce V. Lawrence, Appalchian State University
X.J. Musacchia, University of Louisville
Larry J. Williams, Eastern Illinois University
Gene L. Woodruff, University of Washington
Jules B. LaPidus, *Ex Officio*, Council of Graduate Schools

Regional Affiliate Board Representatives

C.W. Minkel, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Conference of Southern Graduate Schools
George Karas, Iowa State University, Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools
Howard B. Palmer, Pennsylvania State University, Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools
John Nellor, University of Nevada-Reno, Western Association of Graduate Schools

One Dupont Circle, N.W.
Suite #430
Washington, D.C. 20036-1173
202-223-3791